steel. Government would like Bokaro Steel Plant to expand its capacities in a phased manner and stabilise production at each stage of expanded capacity before further expansion is undertaken.

Prices of Edible oils

870. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item entitled "Devaluation raises edible oil prices" which appeared in the daily *Statesman*, New Delhi, dated the 10th July, 1991, indicating that the delayed arrival of South-West monsoon in Gujarat would affect the Kharif groundnut output significantly while the recent devalutaion of the rupee and the foreign exchange crunch would result in high prices of edible oils;

(b) whether Government propose to provide adequate foreign exchange to the STC/Marketing Intervention Agency to augment edible oil supply to hold the price line; and

(c) if not, what other help Government propose to provide to the Marketing Intervention Agency to maintain the prices within the upper band of the edible oil prices spectrum ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has not taken any decision yet about the import of edible oil during the current financial year.

(c) Government has not taken any decision to deny imported oil to NDDB as explained in (b) above. Hence the question of providing other help to the market intervention agency to stabilise prices in lieu of imported edible oil does not arise.

Import of refractories

871. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the steel manufacturers are allowed to import refractories for their use;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to reduce such imports so as to ensure maximum utilisation of indigenous capacity for the manufacture of refractories ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEB): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Special refractories and items like carbon refractories not manufactured in the country for relining of blast furnaces, secondary refining vessels and continuous casting tundishes are allowed to be imported.

(c) Emphasis of Government is to develop indigenous production of such items by diversification and technological upgradation so as to keep imports at minimum level.

Efficiency of Agricultural and unorganised labour

872. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) in what manner Government plan to protect the interest of Agricultural and unorganised labour in the country; and

(b) in what manner Government propose to make such labour as efficient as their counter parts in developed countries of America and Europe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) A number of Central Acts like Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, payment of Wages Act, 1936 and Minimum Wages Act, 1948 etc. are on the statute

book to protect the interests of agricultural and unorganised labour in the country. Government is also considering a Central Legislation to regularise the employment, conditions of service and welfare measures for the agricultural labour.

(b) The Central Board for Workers Education sponsored by the Ministry of Labour has been conducting educational programmes for the workers in the unorganised sector from 1979. Various Labour laws and other related subjects are covered in such training programmes. Some of the State Govenrments/Union Territories have appointed honorary rural organisers under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to impart knowledge about Labour laws to rural workers.

Conversion of MG line into BG line in the country

873. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKAR DAVE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received proposal for conversion of several Metre gauge lines into Broad gauge section in the country;

(b) how many of them have been found acceptable;

(c) what are the norms of acceptance; and

(d) whether gandhidham-Bhuj line is likely to be covered in it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN: (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Proposals for conversion of Muzaffarpur—Narkatiaganj-Gorakhpur and Allahabad Varanasi have been referred to Planning Commission.

(c) The National Transport Policy Committee (NTPC) in their report submitted in May, 1980 had recommended the following criteria for gauge conevrsion projects :—

(i) when it is discovered that the traffic likely to develop in future cannot be handled on the existing system;

(ii) when the magnitude of transhipment involved is such that it is uneconomical or is not feasible at all, to handle the anticipated volume of traffic;

(iii) when it is needed for providing speedy and uninterrupted means of communication to areas which have potential for growth.

(d) No, Sir.

Biological Alternatives for Chemical Pesticides

874. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether chemical pesticides have been found ineffective against such pests as American Boll Worm;

(b) whether in view of this Government would discourage import and manufacture of highly toxic and costly chemical pesticides and switch over to proven biological alternatives as done in South America and Egypt; and

(c) what are the specific alternatives developed in the country for biological pest control system, and integrated pest management at ICAR institutes, Agricultural University and any Non-Government organisations and private firms ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Some pesticides were found to be ineffetcive in controlling Heliothis pest commonly known as American Bollworm on cotton crop in recent years in some States.

(b) The Registeration Committee under the Insecticides Act. 1968 only registers pesticides on accepted parameters of toxicity persistence and bio-efficacy. At the same time Government are encouraging the use of biological alternatives based on our own research and international experience.

(c) The main alternative developed and implemented by us is Integrated Pest